

(Fort Lauderdale, FL) Today, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) made the following remarks on the passing of Lena Rahming-Williams, who died on February 16 at the age of 66. Rahming-Williams was a pillar in Palm Beach County, best known for her dedication to children's causes.

"I wish to express my deepest sympathies on the loss of this wonderful lady," said Hastings. "Ms. Lena,' as she was called with both affection and respect, began Palm Beach County's Head Start program and served its children and their families for nearly 50 years. She truly gave a head start to five generations of children of all ethnicities and cultures."

Mrs. Rahming-Williams was the chairperson of the City of Boynton Beach's Black Awareness program for 25 years and for 30 years, she chaired the Caring Center's Food Pantry. A determined community activist, Lena was considered the people's ambassador in Boynton Beach. Recognizing her fine character, many organizations and government agencies honored her with awards. The Head Start program, of which she was so proud, gave her its highest award, The Wind Beneath My Wings. She was also named Palm Beach County's Employee of the Year. One award included a \$10,000 prize, which she donated to Head Start.

During the presidential election of 2008, Lena Rahming-Williams hosted an appearance by former President Bill Clinton. She was very proud of her role in the election of President Barack Obama. Although her civic activism and political work were important to her, her greatest love was Head Start. She shared the belief of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who said, "I have the audacity to believe that everyone should have three hot meals a day for their bodies; education and culture for their souls; and freedom, equality and integrity for their spirits."

While proud to be an American citizen, Lena Rahming-Williams never forgot her native Bahamas. She founded the National Association of the Bahamas in Florida and hosted the annual celebration of Bahamas Independence for Bahamians living in Florida. Upon the death of Sir Lynden Pindling, the Bahamas' first Prime Minister, she helped organize a wonderful memorial service for all Bahamian natives living in the state of Florida. In 1999, Lena and her friend and fellow community activist, Maude Ford Lee, established the Lena Rahming/Maude Ford Lee Scholarship Fund for High school students who are graduates of the Head Start program.

“Ms. Lena was a person who walked comfortably among people of all nationalities, cultures and classes,” further noted Hastings. “She was deeply loved and widely respected as someone who exemplified everything that is good about her state, her country and the world.

“She has left a mark of greatness and her star will shine brightly forever.”

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings is a senior member of the House Rules Committee, and senior member of the U.S. Helsinki Commission.

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